CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

APRIL 1978

23

President: Mrs R. Mills
Treasurer: Mr L. Bransgrove
Minute Sec: Mrs B. Singleton
General Sec: Mr M. Winterbottom.

Orchids of the Castlemaine District Number 15 of a series

BEARD GREENHOOD Pterostylis barbata by R. Mills

This is one of the showiest of the greenhoods with its plume-like tongue, which is yellow with a red-brown tip, and its green and almost transparent "hood". It grows to a height of about 30 cm. It is not very common.

The one sketched was found at Muckleford.

The flowering time is Spring.

THE VICTORIAN FIELD NATURALISTS CLUBS'

ASSOCIATION CAMPOUT AT CRESWICK March 11-12

A report from our delegate, Mr F. Meyer

I was not able to get there until Sunday as we had our excursion to the "Summer Bush " on the Saturday afternoon.

About 30 delegates attended with about another 20 visitors from Melbourne, Geelong and district clubs,

Saturday afternoon was devoted to a tour of the many deep leads around Creswick. On the evening the annual meeting of the VFNCA was held at which a talk was given by Mr Perry on Deep Lead Mining.

On Sunday at 9 a.m. the quartz crushing battery was started up and we saw the process of crushing quartz and the separation

of gold and other minerals. The method of washing the crushed material was explained and also the later process of using cyanide on the sand to extract the very fine gold which cannot be obtained in the earlier operation.

The battery is operated by the local council mainly to provide facilities to test small ore deposits still being worked in the district.

After the visit to the battery we went for lunch to Slatey Creek. This is an extensive area where in the early days a population of miners estimated at 20 000 to 30 000 worked the gullies and hillsides. After the shallow alluvial was worked out an extensive system of water courses was built through the hills and the area already worked over by individual small claims was subjected to sluicing. Great masses of white quartz now show up on the hill sides and gullies. The whole area was burnt in the bush fires of '77 and now has a dense growth of black wattle. The timber growing is Messmate, Manna Gum, River Red-gum , Acacias, some Casuarinas and a few Native Cherry.

A social evening was held on Sunday and proved an excellent opportunity for delegates and visitors to exchange information about questions of conservation and protection of the environment in Victoria.

On Monday the Forests Commission gave us a most interesting talk on their methods of propagation of plants from seeds and cuttings. We were able to visit the nursery and saw graphic evidence of the effect of bush fires in 1977. Fortunately the nursery was saved but all of the pine forest and most of the native trees surrounding the nursery were burnt out.

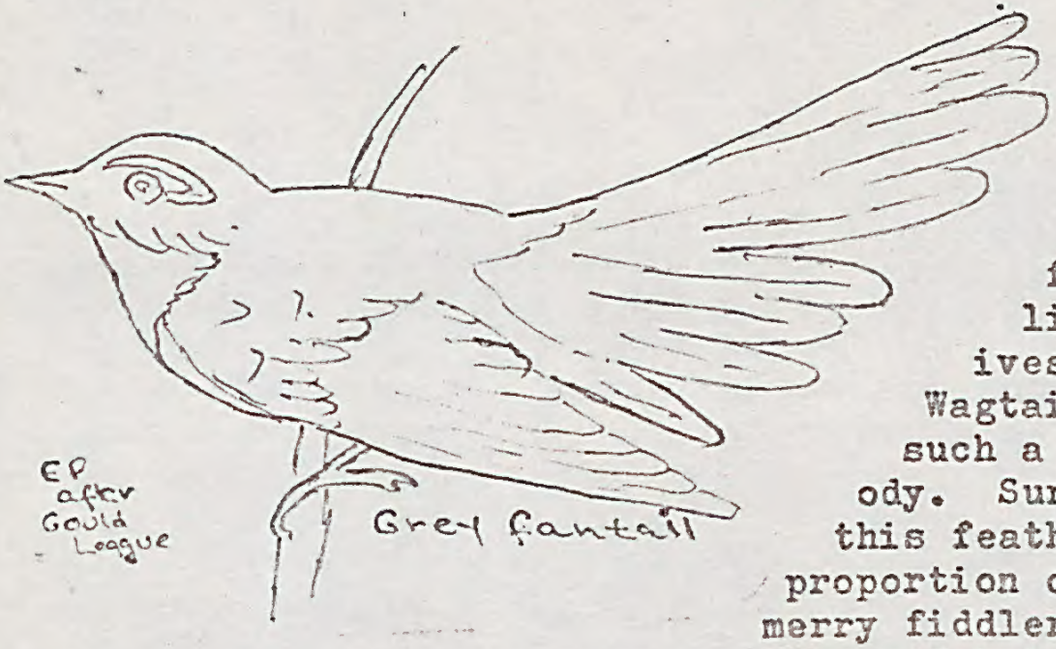
We were able to visit the Forestry School gardens where all of the the trees are named and many have been growing there for nearly a hundred years - there are some beautiful and uniques specimens here.

Meet the Birds in Your Garden No 6 in a series by Ray Wallace

THE GREY FANTAIL

Daintiness personified is the beautiful tiny Grey Fantail whose upper parts are sooty grey, wings are barred white, also a white eyebrow and the outer tail feathers at the base are white as in his throat. The underparts are pale buff.

Dainty little showoffs, they only need a person to enter their



piece of bushland to simper and dance attention in the surrounding trees and shrubs, forever fanning their tails like their close relatives the larger Willie Wagtails. Forever singing in such a sweet whispering melody. Surely in a fairies band this feathered 6" (15 cm) (a big proportion of tail) sprite is the merry fiddler, so much is his voice like a fairies violin.

In the Bendigo area Grey Fantails are found in most areas of bushland from dry mallee scrub to the damper cooler ranges south of Bendigo (Sedgewick, Mt Ida etc.) Usually an occasional winter visitor in my garden, they generally stop for a couple of days and then move on. However last summer, being particularly dry, forced a number of birds from their usual habitat to water, when on various days I had the dear little fantails cavorting and drinking under a garden sprinkler which they shared most amiably with a flock of Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters which also moved into the garden at that period.

The wine-glass nest complete with stem, contains the two pale cream eggs spotted in a zone at the larger end and would certainly delight the heart of any nature lover. It doesn't pay to examine nests, however, as this species, like many others, will desert their nests quickly if interfered with. Entirely insectivorous in diet, if you are fortunate to attract "Cranky Fans" to your garden they will do nothing but good. Besides, how often are we visited by an elfin musician. When I observe this little fairy flitting and strutting in the trees in the early morning my thoughts always go back to two lines of a descriptive poem of Alfred Noyes learnt at school

"Round the Fairy Grass-rings frolic elf and fay
In Serwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day"

(Reprinted from Bendigo SGAP Newsletter)

BOOKS FOR SALE Mr Perry, the WVFNCA book sales officer has indicated that he will be at the coming camp-out. This is a chance to buy Natural History books at a discount.

CLUB PROGRAM

APRIL MEETING Instead of the usual meeting on the 2nd Frid, we meet at Fryerstown Hall on Sat April 22. See enclosed sheet for details

May Meeting Frid May 12, at 8 p.m. in the Ed. Centre.
Speaker: Mr R.D.Watkins.
Subject: The Himalayas

June Meeting Frid June 9 at 8 p.m. in the Ed.Centre.
Speaker: E. Perkins
Subject: Gum Trees.

July Meeting Friday July 7 at 8 pm in the Ed,Centre.
Speaker: Mr R. Smart
Subject Fungi and other things

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

Duck Shooting We share the concern of the Maryborough FNC an about indiscriminate shooting of protected birds, and plan to raise the matter at the WVFNCA meeting

Subscriptions These are now due.

Single member	$3
Family	$5
Student/junior	$1

Pollution and Destruction
The committee suggests that we begin to compile a photographic record of local pollution and destruction, and asks that photographers assist. Either black and white or colour.

Castlemaine Festival We have been asked to consider taking part. Perhaps we could conduct bush walks, or stage an exhibition. Ideas are invited.

EXCURSIONS

April Excursions See the enclosed sheet for details of the excursions in conjunction with the WVFNCA.

May Excursion Fungi to the Ridge Road, Elphinstone. Leader will be Mr R. Smart.
(If weather is unsuitable an alternative excursion will be arranged). Sat May 13, at 1.30

June Excursion Local Eucalypts
Meet Ed Centre at 1.30 on Sunday June 11. Leader: E. Perkins.

July Excursion Muckleford Gorge
Leave the Ed Centre at 1.30 on Sat July 8. Leader: Mr L. Bransgrove

October The Lerderderg Gorge.
Leader: Mr W. Murphy.

Finamcial Statement
Accounts paid include:
Beauglehole fund $50, Ed Centre (room hire) $17, Petty Cash $5, Supper expenses $5, giving a balance of $42.40.

Our promised contribution to the Beauglehole fund has been paid even though all promised donations have not yet been received. Please pay such money to Mr Bransgrove.

$5 has been advanced for supper costs. The committee hopes that with 10 ¢ in the plate the supper will be self supporting.

Next Committee Meeting
Thursday April 27, at 8.pm.

Supper The introduction of supper after meetings has been voted a big success after a one meeting trial. A roster will be drawn up.